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POLAR

Rapports préliminaires sur les travaux exécutés dans l'Antarctique par la mission commandée par M. le Dr. Charcot de 1908 a 1910. Dr. J. Charcot. *Comptes Rendus* de l'Académie des Sciences, 1910, pp. i-xi, 1-103.

Although Dr. Charcot's expedition returned to France in June, the preliminary report upon the studies of the past two years has already been issued. This résumé of scientific observations made on the *Pourquoi-Pas,* is thus issued to supplement the long series of beautiful monographs which have appeared discussing the scientific observations made on the voyage of the *Français.* While two summers and a winter were spent in the Antarctic, no attempt was made to attain the pole, the objects of the expedition being purely geographic and scientific. The present report outlines only, and is in the main a series of résumés of monthly journals made on board the ship.

The expedition wintered at Petermann Island, off Graham Land. During the first summer, a cruise was made along the detached land masses of West Antarctica which had been discovered by the *Belgica* and *Français* expeditions. As a result of these surveys several lands which in order from northeast to southwest have been called Louis Philippe Land, Danco Land, Graham Land, and Loubet Land, are clearly shown to be parts of a common continent whose coast land has been extended southward past Adelaide Island for between three and four degrees to a point south of the Antarctic circle. This part of the continent is separated from Alexander Land lying to the westward by some two degrees of longitude, so that the latter must now be regarded as an island perhaps 100 miles across in its greatest dimension.

The cruise of the next summer discovered land some hundred miles to the southward of Alexander Land (in lat. 70° and long. 77° W.) and the name Marguerite Bay has been given to the great bight in which Alexander Island appears to occupy the center. The most important result of the expedition was the skirting of an "ice wall' extending to longitude 126° W. in a direction nearly due west and approximating to the parallel of 70°. In this long distance land was once seen in Pierre Island (long. 92° W). Soundings along this course supplement the observations of earlier Antarctic expeditions and show that a submerged platform lies to the west of West Antarctica, though this marginal shelf has marked relief and is notably different from that which is common to the other continents. In all, about one hundred soundings were made, of which thirteen were in excess of 1,000 meters. Outside the submerged platform a great fosse was discovered, having a depth of more than 5,000 meters, and this decreased in depth toward the west.

The report is searched in vain for any clear indication of true shelf ice, though the banquise is described as being in places three meters in thickness and as giving birth to large ice blocks or floes which were more or less shattered at the moment of birth.

Gravity determinations were carried out at six widely separated stations (two in South America), and while they are not yet ready for publication, it is announced that they indicate some differences from the theoretical results based upon Helmert's formula. A seismograph was set up at the winter station for eight months and interesting observations were made.

M. Gourdon, who furnished the admirable report upon the physical geography, glaciology, and meteorology of the *Français* expedition, was again the geologist with Dr. Charcot, and his summary of results indicates that new and interesting reports are in prospect.

The monthly summary reports are divided into seven sections, viz.:

I. History of the voyage and general monthly report by the commander.
II. Hydrographic work, astronomical, pendulum, and seismographical observations (Bongrain).
III. Tides, coastal hydrography and chemistry of the air (Godfroy).
IV. Meteorology, atmospheric electricity and physical oceanography (Rouch).
V. Terrestial magnetism, actinometry, and photography (Senouque).
VI. Geology and glaciology (Gourdon).
VII. Zoology (Lionville).

The report is concluded by a series of meteorological tables and a list of soundings.

W. H. Hobbs.

Roald Amundsen's "The North West Passage." Being the Record of a Voyage of Exploration of the ship "Gjöa", 1903-1907. By Roald Amundsen. With a Supplement by First Lieut. Hansen, Vice-Commander of the Expedition. 2 Vols. xxii and 732 pp., 139 illustrations. 3 maps, supplement and index. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1908.

The popular account, finely produced, of Amundsen's famous Arctic expedition, whose results have been summarized in earlier volumes of the *Bulletin*.

GENERAL

The Conquest of the Air. By A. Lawrence Rotch. 192 pp., 36 illustrations and index. Moffat, Yard & Co., New York, 1909. $1.

Mr. Roach was the founder and is the Director of the famous Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory. No one could be better qualified than he to write the chapter on "The Ocean of Air," which opens the book and in which he shows the interdependence of meteorology and aëronautics. In the other chapters he gives thirty pages to the history of aërostation, forty-eight to a description of the varieties of the dirigible balloon, forty-one to the flying machine, and twenty to the future of aërial navigation, in the light of expert and conservative opinion. He believes that the dirigible balloon has nearly reached the limits of its development and enumerates seven particulars in which improvements in the flying machine are necessary. The perusal of this clearly written and authoritative little book will add to the intelligent interest of the millions who will have an opportunity, in the next few years, to watch the flights of air-ships.

Soil Fertility and Permanent Agriculture. By Cyril G. Hopkins, Ph.D. xxiii and 651 pp., 14 illustrations, appendix and index. Ginn & Co., Boston and New York, 1910. $2.75.

All who have to do with the production of farm crops should use this book. It is somewhat technical, as really good books of this kind must be, but anybody of ordinary common sense and intelligence will understand the book if he will study it. It is packed with facts and principles, deals largely with soil investigations by culture experiments, treats of the essential factors of success in farming, gives statistics of agricultural products and bestows adequate atten-